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People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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We wish all our beloved readers indestructible hope and inexhaustible joy that Easter brings

EASTER 2026

Easter Message

The Epistemology of the Risen Christ: Resurrection as the Vindication of Faith and Relational Transformation

Jospeph Mar Ivanios

The Church accepts the Resurrection as the foundation of its faith; every act of worship is an occasion to proclaim that the Risen Lord is present in the midst of the gatherers. The theological significance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends the boundaries of historical biography and enters the realm of a unique Christian epistemology. For the academic and the believer alike, the Resurrection is not merely a restorative miracle but an experience of Truth.

This article argues that the Resurrection constitutes a divine vindication of faith—categorized distinctly from the public nature of the Crucifixion—and finds its ultimate verification in the radical transformation of human relationships. This transformation stands in judgment over contemporary geopolitical and ideological distortions of the Gospel. **Jürgen Moltmann frames the Resurrection as the 'beginning of the new creation,' emphasizing that it is not a return to the old life but a**

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EASTER 2026

Easter Message

Resurrection not to remain a doctrine, but should be a reality we live

Daniel Premkumar

**"Look at my hands and my feet.
It is I myself!
Touch me and see…"
– Luke 24:39 –**

The resurrection of Jesus is not an escape from the body — it is the restoration of the body.

When Jesus rose, He did not leave His wounds behind. He carried them. He showed them. He redeemed them.

Mary recognized Him not as a spirit, but as the One who had walked with her.

The disciples encountered Him in the breaking of bread.

The risen Christ still bore scars — yet those scars no longer spoke of defeat, but of life, dignity, and victory.

This is the heart of the Gospel:

God does not discard the wounded body — God raises it.

Meditation

Yet today, we are confronted with a painful question:

What happens when some bodies are still treated as dispensable?

For generations, Dalit communities have endured the denial of dignity — their bodies marked, excluded, and devalued.

And now, even within the structures meant to protect, justice seems deferred.

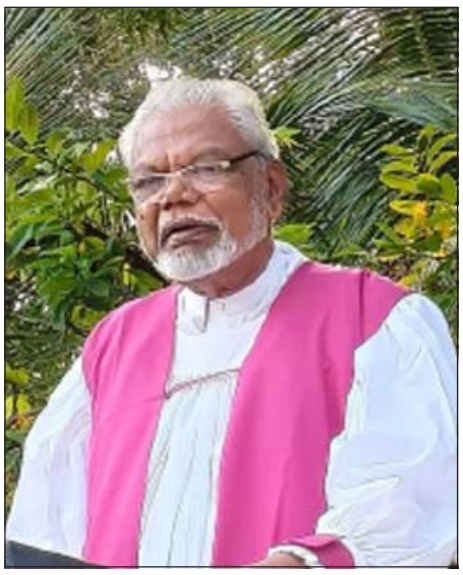
The law may fail. Society may fail.

But the Gospel cannot fail.

For if every human body bears the image of God, then no body is lesser, no life expendable, no suffering invisible.

A Word to the Church

This is a moment of truth — a kairos moment.



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We cannot proclaim:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek… for you are all one in Christ Jesus" and yet live divided lives.

We cannot celebrate Resurrection on Sunday and ignore suffering on Monday.

We cannot call ourselves the Body of Christ while parts of that body remain wounded and unheard.

Invitation

Today, Christ stands among us and asks:

Will you recognize my body?
Not only in bread and wine —
but in the broken, excluded, and denied?
Will we be a Church that:
Practices equality, not just proclaims it
Restores dignity, not just offers sympathy
Stands in truth, even when it is uncomfortable

Prayer

Lord of the wounded and the risen,
You who carried scars into glory,
Teach us to see Your face in every human body.
Forgive us where we have remained silent.
Forgive us where we have accepted division.
Give us courage to stand for justice,
Compassion to embrace the rejected,
And grace to become truly Your Body.
May resurrection not remain a doctrine we confess,
But a reality we live.
In Your risen name,
Amen.

People's Reporter
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Good News to the Whole Creation

"Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at the table …..,. And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation'." Mark Ch.16 Verses 14 & 15 (RSV). The call of the Risen Lord to the specially chosen disciples was to move out of their secure confines and dining table, and to preach the gospel of the Parent God's redemptive concern for the whole creation. Amazingly, those fear-stricken disciples "went forth and preached everywhere." Mark 16: 20.

An encounter with the Risen Lord awakens us to Parent God's gospel for the whole creation, and emboldens us to go out of our limited, comfortable confines and concerns, and inspires us with a new vision and commitment.

May the celebration of Easter enable us to meet with the Risen Lord, and fill us with a new vision and determination to move out of our petty concerns and to enlarge our horizons and to participate in the Parent God's redemptive engagement for the 'whole creation'.

Cuba asphyxiated for regime change

Immediately after assuming office for the second term on 20 January 2025, President Donald Trump declared his wish to make Canada a province of the US, annex Greenland as a territory of his country and to effect regime change in Venezuela, Cuba and Iran. As Canada and Denmark condemned his aspirations, he kept a pause on those projects. But, on 3 January 2026, through a secret military operation, the US captured Mr. Nicholas Maduro, the President of Venezuela, and his wife, and managed regime change in that country. With this, he brought the oil-wealth of that country under the control of the US. Immediately after this, on 9 January, he imposed blockade for import of oil to Cuba, as a weapon for regime change in that country.

As a result of this, the daily life of the people and the public services in that country have been severely affected for the last three months. Cuba is a small country of hardly 10 million people, and that country has been suffering the impacts of blockades imposed by the US repeatedly over the past six decades. But the global community and world leaders did not take seriously the extreme hardships imposed on the life of the people and the rights of the government as a violation of international laws.

It is the absence of condemnation of these acts of aggression in Venezuela and Cuba that gave President Trump confidence to launch unprovoked attacks on Iran on 28 February, along with Israel, with the declared objective of regime-change in that country. The aggressors hoped that they would be able to defeat Iran within a week and achieve their objectives. However, contrary to their calculations, even after one month, the war gets intensified with even signs of escalating to World War lll. Whereas the atrocities of the war against Iran capture the attention of the people and the media, the miseries of the people in Cuba for the last three months very sadly remain unnoticed.

Cuba is a country where 83% of power is generated from oil. Therefore, the blockade on the import of oil hampered the generation of power severely. There were three grid collapses in March. As a result, Cuban people face daily blackout of upto 15 hours. Under this scenario, garbage is piling up in Havana and other cities, perishable food is rotting and industries and government offices are shut. While Cuba is forced to be asphyxiated, Donald Trump claims that Cuba is "seeing the end", and boasts that he will have the "honour" of "taking "Cuba, and has called on the Cuban government to "make a deal before it is too late".

What is more disturbing is that, Cuba, suffering the impacts of the blockade for almost the last six decades, is labelled as a terrorist state – the victim of the US terrorism is labelled as a terrorist state! Barack Obama changed this policy and started diplomatic relation with Cuba. But, after a short period, Donald Trump reverted this policy and declared his wish for regime - change in Cuba. Since the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1961, the US has been continuing the project of regime change in countries having valuable resources or strategic locations to establish and maintain her hegemony. Recently, in Iraq and Libya regime-change was achieved by killing heads of states, and in Syria by allowing the head of state to flee the country. After achieving a bloodless coup in Venezuela, the US seeks the same in Cuba too. What is unfortunate is that, each unchallenged act of imperial over-reach normalises the next, and people and governments get accustomed to recognise the law of the jungle in the world, as normal.

Thought for the Fortnight

'Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee and there they will see me." '

– Matthew 28:10 (RSV)

EASTER 2026

Easter Message

The Epistemology of the Risen Christ: Resurrection as the Vindication of Faith and Relational Transformation

**The contemporary world faces a severe theological critique.
The persistence of war and the 'eye for an eye' mentality are symptoms of a world still trapped in a 'pre-Resurrection' graveyard.
To rely on the sword is to deny the victory of the Risen One, who appeared with the greeting, 'Peace be with you' (John 20:19).
When faith is used as a tool for exclusion or personal power, it becomes an instrument of the 'old man' (Ephesians 4:22), fundamentally at odds with the Risen Christ who broke down the 'wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:14).**

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transformation of all cosmic and social relationships.

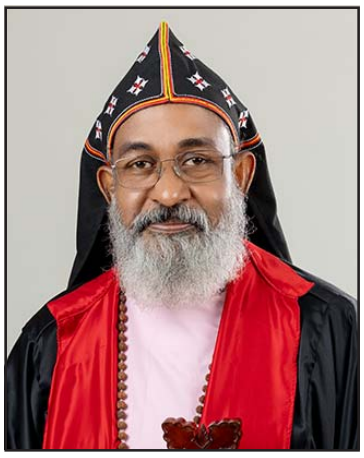
The Resurrection as an Epistemological Event

The Resurrection is the supreme 'Experience of Truth,' yet it is a truth that requires a specific predisposition: faith. Unlike the empirical 'facts' of the natural world, the Risen Christ is known through a spiritual recognition that surpasses biological sight. The Lukan and Johannine accounts provide archetypal illustrations of this transition from sight to insight. The women at the tomb — Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James — encounter the absence of the body (Luke 24:1-12). **Their realization of the Resurrection was not a deduction from the empty tomb alone, but a response rooted in their deep-seated faith in Jesus Christ.**

Categorical Dissonance: Crucifixion and the Vindication of Faith

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection belong to two distinct categories of occurrence. The Passion of Christ on the cross was an event open to all, including soldiers, passersby, and believers; it was a public event. As noted in the Johannine account, the title on the cross was inscribed in multiple languages (John 19:20), signalling its accessibility to the entire socio-political order.

However, the Resurrection was not a public demonstration intended to coerce the Roman guard or the Sanhedrin into belief. It was a private vindication for the community of faith. While the world viewed the cross as the ultimate negation of Jesus' mission, the Resurrection



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serves as the divine vindication of the faith of the believers (1 Timothy 3:16). **It is the Father's 'Yes' to the Son's obedience. This victory over death is not a triumph of worldly power but a victory discerned through the 'obedience of faith' (Romans 1:5). It confirms that the Kingdom of God operates on a logic that the "rulers of this age" cannot comprehend (1 Corinthians 2:8).**

The Ontological Proof: The Transformation of Relationships

The proof of the Resurrection is the quality of change in the relational fabric of the human community. St. Paul argues that 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17-RSV). This new creation is characterized by the collapse of hostile divisions (Galatians 3:28). **Rowan Williams considers the Resurrection an interruption of human history by God's act — one that redefines identity and community. He specifically addresses how the Risen Christ creates a community of forgiveness, shifting the focus toward relational transformation.** This transformation is the mandate that the Resurrection offers to the world: a shift from the transactional to the sacrificial.

Conclusion

In this light, the contemporary world faces a severe theological critique. The persistence of war and the 'eye for an eye' mentality are symptoms of a world still trapped in a 'pre-Resurrection' graveyard. To rely on the sword is to deny the victory of the Risen One, who appeared with the greeting, 'Peace be with you' (John 20:19). When faith is used as a tool for exclusion or personal power, it becomes an instrument of the 'old man' (Ephesians 4:22), fundamentally at odds with the Risen Christ who broke down the 'wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:14). ●

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Easter Messages

Easter As "Theology of Hope"

M. Mani Chacko

Easter is a concrete realisation of a "theology of hope" because it anchors Christian eschatology not in speculation about the future, but in the historical event of Christ's resurrection as God's decisive "yes" to life over death and to new creation over despair.This transforms hope from mere psychological optimism into a robust ecclesial and existential posture grounded in what God has already done in raising Jesus.

Christian "Easter hope" differs from ordinary optimism because it is not based on favourable circumstances or probability, but on God's past act of raising Jesus.
This hope is based on God's power, meaning it can endure persecution, suffering, and even death without collapsing, precisely because it is rooted in the empty tomb.

The phrase "theology of hope" is associated with Jürgen Moltmann, who developed it in response to the devastation of World War II and the Holocaust, arguing that Christian hope is directed toward God's future, not the present order. In this framework, hope is not dreaming but trusting in God's promise that the future will be radically different from the present, and that God has already begun this new future in Christ.

Moltmann explicitly links Easter to hope signalling that the future God offers is not annihilation but life in all its fullness. New Testament theology likewise treats Easter not as a confirmed expectation but as an unexpected event that becomes the foundation of all hope.

Christian "Easter hope" differs from ordinary optimism because it is not based on favourable circumstances or probability, but on God's past act of raising Jesus. This hope is based on God's power, meaning it can endure persecution, suffering, and even death without collapsing, precisely because it is rooted in the empty tomb.

For persecuted or suffering communities including many in Iran, Easter as "theology of hope" underlines that injustice and death do not have the final word; they are already relativized by the resurrection. Easter as "theology of hope," then, calls the church to live out that future now—through solidarity with the crucified poor, resistance to dehumanising structures, and the practice of a life oriented, resurrection disciplined discipleship. ●

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Resurrection in a Time of War: A Dalit Reading of John 11:1–45

Immanuel Karunakaran

We do not read Scripture from nowhere. We read from somewhere. I come to John 11 as an international student learning how to live within the rule of law in the United States, as a person of colour conscious of being perceived through the lens of threat, and as a Dalit Christian who knows what it means to endure a war within — a war shaped by polluted identity and a wounded psyche. The Gospel text meets me in this location. And the location matters.

John situates this story in Bethany, a small village not far from Jerusalem, in a land occupied by Rome. Death in that world is not merely biological. It is political. It is structured by the empire. When we read the raising of Lazarus in our own moment of global conflict, displacement, and weaponized religion, we are not imposing politics onto the text. We are recognizing that this story already unfolds under the shadow of power.

"I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus says (v. 25). He does not promise resurrection as a distant reward. He embodies it as present reality. In a world where nations claim they must take life to secure life, this declaration unsettles our moral logic. **Resurrection does not preserve life by destroying another's. It restores life that has been taken. From a Dalit Christian perspective, resurrection is God's refusal to let caste, racial hierarchy, or imperial violence define the final word. It is hope not for those who cling to power, but for those who have lost everything. The promise of life belongs most clearly to those who have been denied it.**

The Resurrection is good news because it promises abundant life.
But abundance is not secured by violence.
It is given through self-giving love.
You cannot preserve life by clutching it at the expense of your neighbour.
Whoever seeks only to save one's own life will lose it.
Resurrection hope belongs to those who entrust their lives to God, even in loss.

Yet, before resurrection comes tears. "Jesus wept" (v. 35). This shortest verse may be the most disruptive. Jesus does not explain death as necessary. He does not spiritualize it or frame it as collateral damage in a larger divine plan. He stands before the tomb and grieves. In a time when religious identities are weaponized to justify violence, this verse becomes a theological boundary. God does not celebrate destruction done in God's name. God mourns it. Tears here are not weakness; they are protests. They are the waters that resist the fires of hatred. **For communities taught to suppress grief in order to survive, the public tears of Christ reveal a God who refuses numbness.**

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The command in verse 39 shifts the responsibility outward: "Take away the stone." Jesus could have moved it himself. Instead, he calls the community to act. This is where accountability enters the story. Not blame that traps us in endless accusation, but accountability that asks what we must do and undo. In contexts of war, stones become symbols of protection. We justify them as shields for security. But sometimes those same stones seal tombs. **As Christians, we are called to examine which stones we are guarding and whether they conceal death rather than preserve life. If Christ is the cornerstone, then our security does not rest in fortified boundaries but in him.**

When Jesus cries out with a loud voice in verse 43, he does not whisper resurrection into existence. He calls Lazarus by name. The voice of Christ is disruptive. It breaks through the silence of the grave. For those shaped by the conviction that without agitation there is no liberation, this cry resonates deeply. It is not agitation rooted in hatred. It is agitation rooted in love — love that refuses to accept death as normal. **In a polarized society, raising one's voice for justice can feel dangerous, especially for those whose presence is already scrutinized. Yet this text suggests that faithful love is sometimes necessarily loud.**

The final command, "Unbind him, and let him go" (v. 44), makes

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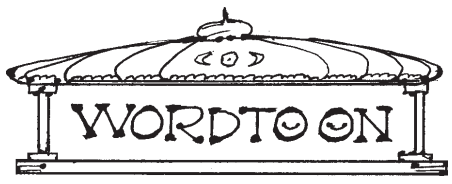

GLORY always GLOWS

Young People's Column

Easter Messages

Easter Amid Escalation: Resurrection Hope in the Shadow of the Iran War

Sam T. Rajkumar

Easter, the central proclamation of the Christian faith, announces the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an affirmation that life overcomes death.

In 2026, this proclamation resounds against the backdrop of a rapidly escalating war involving Iran, Israel, and the United States. What began as targeted military strikes has evolved into a widening regional conflict marked by missile exchanges, civilian casualties, and global economic disruption. In such a context, Easter is not merely a liturgical celebration but an urgent theological question. What does 'Resurrection' mean in a world increasingly defined by war?

Recent developments underscore the gravity of the crisis. High-ranking political and military figures have been killed in targeted strikes, provoking retaliatory attacks across national borders. Civilian populations continue to bear the brunt of the violence, while critical infrastructures have been severely damaged. The destabilization of key maritime routes, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, has triggered global economic consequences, including rising energy prices and inflationary pressures. Humanitarian agencies warn that the conflict may significantly increase food insecurity and place millions at the risk of acute hunger.

Easter, in the time of the Iran war, is not an abstract theological ideal but a profoundly relevant message. It speaks into a world marked by fear, fragmentation, and conflict, offering a vision of life that transcends the logic of war.

Against this grim reality, Easter confronts us with a paradox. The resurrection does not bypass suffering. It emerges from within it. The crucifixion of Jesus was itself a form of political violence, an execution carried out under imperial authority. N. T. Wright argues, "The resurrection does not cancel the cross; it reveals its deeper meaning" (Wright 2003). **In this sense, Easter is not escapist optimism but a transformative hope born out of trauma.**

This insight is crucial for interpreting the present conflict. The Iran war exemplifies the escalatory logic of modern warfare, where cycles of retaliation intensify rather than resolve conflict. Each strike invites a counterstrike, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of violence. What emerges is not security but instability, political, economic, and humanitarian. The expanding scope of the conflict reveals how fragile global systems are and how quickly localized violence can become a broader crisis.

Easter challenges this logic of inevitability. The resurrection is not the triumph of coercive power but the vindication of a life marked by self-giving love. Jürgen Moltmann, in *The Crucified God*, contends that Christian hope is grounded in a God who suffers with humanity and transforms suffering from within (Moltmann 1974). This theological vision disrupts dominant narratives of war that equate victory with domination and security with force.

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Moreover, Easter invites a rethinking of power itself. The current conflict exposes the illusion that military strength guarantees stability. Despite advanced weaponry and strategic alliances, the result has been widespread destruction and deepening insecurity. **In contrast, the resurrection points toward a different paradigm, one rooted in reconciliation, justice, and the restoration of relationships. It calls into question systems that prioritize geopolitical interests over human dignity.**

The image of the Risen Christ bearing the wounds of crucifixion (John 20:27) is particularly significant. Resurrection does not erase scars. It transforms them. For societies affected by war, this suggests that healing requires not forgetting but remembering rightly. It calls for processes of truth-telling, accountability, and reconciliation, practices often overshadowed by the immediate demands of conflict but essential for lasting peace.

In practical terms, the Easter message is both critical and constructive. It critiques the normalization of violence and the structures that sustain it. At the same time, it calls communities, especially faith communities, to embody alternative ways of living. This includes advocating for ceasefires, supporting humanitarian relief, and fostering dialogue across political and religious divides. **As Miroslav Volf argues, the ethical imperative of Christianity lies in the "will to embrace" even those perceived as enemies (Volf 1996).**

Importantly, Easter also resists despair. The scale of the present crisis, from geopolitical instability to global hunger, can engender a sense of helplessness. Yet the resurrection proclaims that even in the face of overwhelming death, new life is possible. This is not naïve optimism but a form of hope grounded in the conviction that violence does not have the final word.

In conclusion, Easter, in the time of the Iran war, is not an abstract theological ideal but a profoundly relevant message. It speaks into a world marked by fear, fragmentation, and conflict, offering a vision of life that transcends the logic of war. It calls for a reimagining of power, a commitment to justice, and a renewed pursuit of peace. If the resurrection means anything today, it is this. Even in the shadow of war, the possibility of new life remains, and with it, the responsibility to pursue it.

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Easter Messages

Resurrection in a Time of War: A Dalit Reading of John 11:1–45

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clear that resurrection is not complete at the moment of restored breath. **Lazarus emerges alive but still wrapped in grave clothes. The community must participate in his freedom. Liberation is communal work. It requires unbinding those constrained by fear, prejudice, nationalism, and internalized shame.** In our present context, binding can take the form of racial suspicion, religious superiority, or narratives that divide humanity into ultimate insiders and ultimate enemies. **The work of the church is not to tighten those wrappings but to loosen them.**

This passage can be confined to a Christological miracle story, focused solely on Jesus' power

May we learn to read the text, John 11:1-45, not as escape from our world, but as light within it. May the resurrection renew not only our hearts but our public witness. And may we become a community that helps roll away stones and unbind those still wrapped in the garments of war.

over death. But read from within a world marked by war and divided by weaponized faith, it becomes more. It becomes a call to renewal that is public, not private. Renewal of courage to grieve honestly. Renewal of truth-telling that holds actors accountable without dehumanizing them. Renewal of solidarity with those standing at gravesides, whether literal or symbolic.

As an international student, I am required to obey the law of this land (USA) in order to survive. Obedience, however, does not

require moral silence. John 11 offers a pattern: stand at the tomb, weep truthfully, roll stones together, cry out against death, unbind one another. This is not rebellion for its own sake. It is resurrection-shaped accountability.

Resurrection in Jesus is good news because it promises abundant life. But abundance is not secured by violence. It is given through self-giving love. You cannot preserve life by clutching it at the expense of your neighbour. Whoever seeks only to save their own life will lose it. Resurrection hope belongs to those who entrust their lives to God, even in loss.

In a world awaiting ceasefires, remembering resurrection does not erase the cost of death. It reminds us that every story of restored life passes through real grief. It calls Christians who claim to believe in life to examine whether our actions align with the One who weeps, commands stones to be moved, cries out against death, and insists that the bound be set free.

May we learn to read this text not as escape from our world, but as light within it. May the resurrection renew not only our hearts but our public witness. And may we become a community that helps roll away stones and unbind those still wrapped in the garments of war.

Young People's Column

Easter Message

The Wounds of Jesus: A Body-Centered Easter Reflection

Aravind Theodore

The resurrection event is not a call to erase the past or cover up the wounds, but rather, a promise of renewal and healing that emerges from them. Jesus offers life, new beginnings, and hope while inviting us to pay attention to the memories and experiences our wounded bodies carry.

Are you tired of getting rid of the wounds that have been inflicted on you? Are you in the process of making meaning of things you have experienced in the light of the resurrection? Can the resurrection event address the body and its scars, as well as grief and pain?

Usually, when we speak of the resurrection, one of the first thoughts that comes to our mind is Jesus overcoming death. Yes, Jesus overcame death, but what about the wounds that marked his suffering? **In Luke 24:40, we read, "… he showed them his hands and his feet." If the marks remained, I believe, there is meaning in Jesus' post-resurrection act of showing his disciples his wounds.**

We all have experienced loss, sorrow, and grief, spoken and unspoken, for reasons known and unknown. There might have been times when we were advised to let them go, and move on, rather than being counselled to take our time and heal. Self-proclaimed men and women of God have spiritualized and morally evaluated our experiences, teaching us to view loss and sorrow as negative, a hindrance to our progress, and our woundedness as an impediment to our spiritual and emotional (and dare I say financial) blessings. Our trauma is perceived as demonic and in need of deliverance, and our wounds perceived as grotesque and in need of covering. **The belittling and denial of our deepest emotions are unfortunately all too real.**

But in Luke 24, we witness Jesus doing something different. He did not bury the past nor hide his wounds; he, in fact, offered them up to be seen and, astonishingly, be touched. His wounds carried memories of the past—the abuse, denial, betrayal with a kiss, scorn, grief, suffering, and death. Yet, the wounded and scarred body of Jesus had now become part of his identity, so much so that only in seeing and touching the scars might the disciples actually come to *recognize* who he was. The wounds did not disappear after the resurrection; they became all the more visible. The risen Jesus carried the wounds of the crucified Jesus.

Writing on grief, Shikha Sinchury gestures towards **the idea that grief is not something we get over with, but rather something we integrate into who we are becoming.** That Jesus was able to speak about his death after the resurrection (Luke 24:26-27) and invite his disciples to see and touch his wounds—a space marked with grief and torture—suggests that he did not dismiss or circumvent what had happened to his body, but integrated it into who he had become. The invitation to *touch* his wounds indicates that one can experience healing, restoration, and fellowship only by recognizing and acknowledging past-wounds (v. 42-49). **And by exposing his wounds, in becoming vulnerable, Jesus validates the disciples' grief.**

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The resurrection points to a new start, but this newness is not born in a vacuum. Instead, it emerges from the old, the spiritual and corporeal experiences of the past. **Jesus' words, "look at my hands and my feet," urge us to look inward and reckon with the lingering signs of our woundedness.** Most Christians struggle to hold space for experiences of loss, grief, and trauma. I suspect, one reason is that Easter comes all too quickly after Good Friday, and we feel compelled to suppress our experiences of loss, hide our wounds, and proclaim optimism as a sign of faith. Don't we do the same with Jesus? We empathize with his suffering, and we mourn his death, only to celebrate his 'triumphant conquering of death,' as if it erases the memory and scars of the cross. **But the risen Jesus invites us to see and feel the wounds of the past, not to justify what caused them but to acknowledge their presence.**

The resurrection event is not a call to erase the past or cover up the wounds, but rather, a promise of renewal and healing that emerges from them. Jesus offers life, new beginnings, and hope while inviting us to pay attention to the memories and experiences our wounded bodies carry. And yes, the invitation doesn't stop at the personal; the body of Jesus, as we witness and experience it today, is communal.

Therefore, I believe Jesus is calling us today to acknowledge the wounds of the oppressed and abused, victimized and cheated, slandered and violated. Just as Jesus invited his disciples to see and touch his wounds, the Jesus in Gaza, in the *cheri (slums),* at the borders, in the streets, in Manipur, in the prison, at war-zones, and in the occupied territories invites us to see and touch his wounds. The renewal that the resurrection promises emerges from the wounded and scarred body of Jesus. ●

Easter Message

Beyond Epiphanies

Piotr Konderak

Easter offers hope that the story does not end with fragile glimpses of meaning. The resurrection of Jesus points toward the restoration of meaning beyond the temporary and fleeting character of epiphanies.

Easter, the story of Jesus's suffering, death and resurrection, invites us to reflect on experiences of trauma and helplessness in the face of human sufferings that accompany what philosophers call *boundary situations*. The COVID-19 pandemic, the wars and destructions we witness in Ukraine and Palestine, and the struggles of young people facing severe mental health crises, sometimes standing on the fragile border between life and death, are only a few examples of such situations in our world today.

In all these situations the familiar world seems to fall apart. The meanings we normally rely on, suddenly dissolve. Until such moments we know how to behave, how to name what happens, how to interpret events. But traumatic experience disrupts these patterns. **During the pandemic, for example, physical closeness, normally the foundation of our emotional life, suddenly became a potential source of death.** In situations where someone is close to dying, sleep - usually understood as something restorative - may become a final departure. What used to give hope becomes a source of fear. Reality begins to resemble chaos, something difficult to make sense of.

Good Friday events, the trial, the Way of the Cross, crucifixion also embody such a boundary situation. For the disciples and those who followed him, the death of Jesus must have felt like the collapse of meaning.

Sometimes, however, in everyday life we experience brief moments in which meaning is partially restored. These moments are what I understand as *epiphanies*. They are fleeting experiences in which a boundary situation - for example the process of someone's dying - becomes, for a moment, intelligible enough for us to continue acting. Such moments can bring a temporary feeling of relief, perhaps because they restore a fragile sense that our actions still matter.

Yet this fragile structure of meaning soon dissolves again. Patients continue to die despite the devoted efforts of doctors. Young people sometimes take their own lives despite the presence and care of others. **The epiphany was only, as one song says,*" just one single glimpse of relief / to make some sense of what you've seen."***

What remains are small gestures: presence, holding someone's hand, a word of support. Meaning may reside in these gestures, even if we are unable to make sense of the whole surrounding reality.

Easter offers hope that the story does not end with such fragile glimpses of meaning. The resurrection of Jesus points toward the restoration of meaning beyond the temporary and fleeting character of epiphanies.

I wish all readers a peaceful and hopeful Easter.

[Dr. Piotr Konderak is Associate Professor at Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Head of the Dept. of Logic and Cognitive Science and the Director of the Institute of Philosophy, Poland. His research interests concern problems of Philosophy of mind and phenomenology.] ●

Climate and Biodiversity - 2

What does a hippopotamus have to do with the health of children?

Mathew Koshy

**The story of Lake Edward teaches us a profound lesson:
every species has a role in the web of life.
Even a creature that may appear insignificant — or even troublesome —
can be an essential participant in the delicate balance of creation.
In this way, biodiversity truly functions like a living network.
When one strand breaks, the whole fabric of life weakens.**

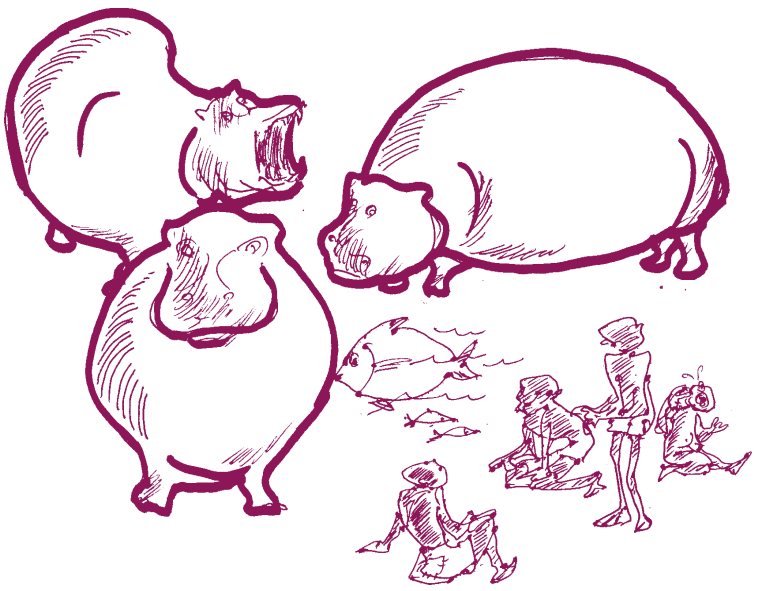
At first glance, the question may sound strange. Yet in the communities around Lake Edward in Central Africa, the disappearance of hippos once triggered a chain of events that eventually affected human health. This remarkable story reminds us that biodiversity is not simply about protecting wildlife. It is about protecting the delicate web of life that sustains ecosystems, livelihoods, and even the wellbeing of our children. When one species disappears, the consequences can ripple through nature in ways we never imagined.

The Hidden Role of the Hippopotamus

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Lake Edward region supported one of the **largest hippopotamus populations in Africa**, with nearly **29,000 hippos** living around the lake. These animals played an unexpected but vital role in maintaining the health of the ecosystem.

Hippos graze on grasslands along the lake shore during the night. During the day, they spend long hours resting in the water. While in the lake, they release large quantities of dung.

A single hippopotamus can produce **about 25 kilograms of dung every day**. This dung acts as a natural fertilizer in the water, supplying nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients nourish algae and plankton—the microscopic organisms that form the foundation of the aquatic food chain.



Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackadu is presently the Commissioner, Climate Justice and Sustainable Development of the World Council of Churches. Dr. Mathew Koshy Punnackadu is the Project Director of the CSI Community Development Programme.

These tiny organisms, in turn, support large populations of fish, particularly **tilapia**, which once thrived in Lake Edward.

When the Hippos Disappeared

In the late twentieth century, political instability and armed conflicts in the region led to widespread **poaching of hippopotamuses**. Hippos were killed for their meat and for the ivory-like material in their teeth. As a result, the hippo population declined dramatically—by **more than 90 percent**. By 2006, only a few hundred hippos remained in the area.

The disappearance of the hippos triggered an unexpected ecological chain reaction.

With fewer hippos in the lake, the supply of nutrients from hippo dung declined sharply. Without these nutrients, algae and plankton populations decreased. As a result, the **tilapia population also declined drastically**.

The Human Consequence

For the communities living around Lake Edward, fish had long been a primary source of protein. As fish catches declined, families struggled to obtain adequate nutrition.The protein shortage had serious consequences, particularly for children. **Many suffered from malnutrition and related diseases, and child mortality increased in several communities.**

What seemed at first to be the disappearance of a single animal species turned out to be a crisis affecting human health and livelihoods.

A Powerful Ecological Lesson

Ecologists often summarise this chain of life in a simple sequence:

Grasslands – Hippos – Nutrients in the lake – Algae – Fish – Humans

The loss of one species disrupted the entire system.

The story of Lake Edward teaches us a profound lesson: **every species has a role in the web of life**. Even a creature that may appear insignificant — or even troublesome — can be an essential participant in the delicate balance of creation.

In this way, biodiversity truly functions like a **living network**. When one strand breaks, the whole fabric of life weakens.

The theme "Climate and Biodiversity" therefore calls humanity to rediscover a fundamental truth: protecting biodiversity is not only about saving wildlife. It is about protecting the stability of ecosystems, the well-being of communities, and the future of our children. ●

oikoumene World Council of Churches

WCC urges binding finance rules for global justice

The global financial system is producing "growth without justice, efficiency without equity, and profit without peace." That was the assessment Rev. Nicole Ashwood, programme executive for the World Council of Churches (WCC) Just Community of Women and Men, brought to Geneva, Switzerland, on 25 March, speaking at a Human Rights Council side event cosponsored by the WCC and the Sikh Human Rights Group.

**Three important demands
1) Reform international financial governance to serve people rather than markets
2) Establish reparative and ecological justice embedded in debt restructuring
3) Ensure genuine, not symbolic, participation for women, racialised,
and Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities in economic decision-making.**

The session, titled "Financing the SDGs: Need for a Human Rights Approach," was one of dozens of civil society events running alongside the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council. But Ashwood's address pressed beyond the standard development framing. At its centre was a theological claim drawn from the WCC Jakarta Declaration, marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: "Every person, without exception, is created in the image of God and is called to abundant life." That principle, she argued, has a concrete corollary: economies that produce deprivation are not merely inefficient. They are structurally misaligned with the purpose of human society.

The numbers she cited underline the gap between aspiration and reality. According to the OPHI/UNDP Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024, more than 1.1 billion people, including 566 million children, live in multidimensional poverty. Over the same period, Oxfam's 2025 *Takers Not Makers* report found that billionaire wealth surged from US$13 trillion to US$15 trillion in a single year. The World Inequality Report 2022 places the income share of the richest ten percent at 52 percent of global income; the poorest half of humanity earns just 8.5 per cent.

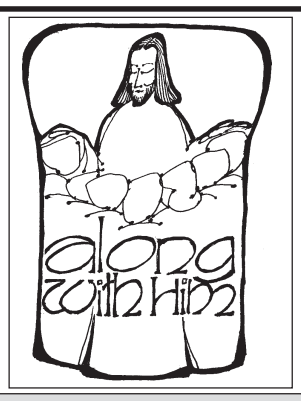
"Fourteen years after the São Paulo Statement on International Financial Transformation for an Economy of Life," Ashwood said, "inequality remains structural rather than incidental." She drew directly on the New International Financial and Economic Architecture, a joint ecumenical initiative convened by six bodies, including the WCC. **The New International Financial and Economic Architecture traces today's inequalities to "the legacy of colonialism, the stolen land of Indigenous communities… and the unremunerated and unrecognised care work of women and girls."**

For Ashwood, the climate and debt crises are not separate emergencies. Climate disruption, she said, is "the unpaid invoice of extractive growth," an argument for binding financial mechanisms on climate justice and loss and damage, not further voluntary pledges.

She closed with three demands: reform of international financial governance to serve people rather than markets; reparative and ecological justice embedded in debt restructuring; and genuine, not symbolic, participation for women, racialised, and Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, in economic decision-making.

"Inclusion without transformation preserves inequality," she said. "Justice in all its iterations requires restructuring power itself."

– WCC News



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Mammen Varkey

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the father has sent me, even so I send you". And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
John 20:19-23 (RSV)

Easter Reflections – 1

The Path of the Cross will Lead to the Resurrection

The Risen Master went after the disciples who had run away from him

The verse 19 is "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you' ". On the same day he rose up from the dead, according to John, Jesus went to meet his disciples. In the closed room, there would have been also followers other than the specially chosen disciples. It is important to remember that who were these disciples, especially, those of the twelve? **They had been chosen to be with him, Mark 3:14. But all those disciples ran away from the cross when their Master was crucified. Only a few women opted to be near the cross. Matt. 27:55.** So it is important to note that the Risen Master went after his disciples who had deserted him, their Master, who had run away from him, at the time when he suffered most. Again, when Mary Magdalene, ran back from the empty tomb and told the disciples, that the tomb was empty, according to John, only 'Peter and the other disciple' rushed to the tomb to enquire what happened to their Master. No other disciple is recorded to have gone out enquiring about their Master. Either they did not take seriously the words of the women or they did not have the courage to go out and expose themselves to the powerful people hostile to them. It was to such a set of people, a set of cowards or 'deserters', the Risen Master went. He entered their house with locked doors with the greeting, "Peace be with you". It was a great act loudly proclaiming the Risen Master's deep concern for his disciples.Not only that the Risen Master went after the disciples who did not rush out and engage themselves in a serious search of their Master, **but also that he met them with no words of reproach.**

The words that opened a new phase of life for them

He met them with words of peace. In fact, it was peace that the disciples wanted most then. **"Peace be with you" were not mere formal words of greetings. Repeating the words "Peace be with you", the Risen Master was taking them out of the depths of their disappointments and worries.**

An act that had inexpressibly profound impact on disciples

Significantly, after greeting the disciples, the Risen Master showed them his hands and his side, that is, the marks of the nails and the wounds made with the spears on his side. Usually, it is understood as an act for identification, and to show that his rising up was bodily resurrection. It is true. **But more importantly, that act would have had inexpressibly profound impact on the disciples. Those marks would have, definitely, aroused in them the memories of the previous days and the words of their Master as they journeyed together from Galilee to Jerusalem. And how their Master, in full obedience to the will of God, submitted himself to be crucified.**

Indirectly, the Risen Master was affirming the path, the way of the Cross, and conveying to them that the path of the Cross would lead them to resurrection. It was after that, the Risen Master called them again to be engaged in mission and sent them out, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." ●

To be continued

LAMP UNTO THE FEET, LIGHT UNTO THE PATH

Easter: Celebration Of The Christian Hope Of Resurrection And Transfiguration

A. V. Itty

1 Cor: 15:50 -58

"So then, my dear brothers, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless" (v.58)

At Easter we celebrate the Christian hope of resurrection and transfiguration. Easter proclaims the victory of life over death and love over hatred. Easter gives the humanity the power to become new beings and face life with new hope and courage.

I have read of an incident like this:

A caterpillar which has come out of the egg of a butterfly has been devouring green leaves and growing up. It spent each day fearful of the birds, and was very prudent to be always in the cover of the leaves. Seeing the other birds and butterflies freely roaming and flying around, it felt really disgusted with itself. At that time a parrot came and sat on the branch it was living. The caterpillar poured out all its disgust and despair to it. And the parrot replied: "Dear caterpillar, your condition is quite temporary. You are to become a very beautiful butterfly. At that time your life will be totally changed. Your food will no longer be the leaves, but the sweet honey from the flowers!" This is an imaginary story. But, the picture the Apostle gives in the Scripture portion we meditate upon, of the resurrection and transformation that will happen in our lives at the time of the second coming of our Lord, is a similar one. The resurrection reality we are celebrating at the Easter Sunday gives us an assurance of the same.

The human bodies that we wear today are subject to disease, pain, sorrows, and death. Even a slight change of

climate can badly affect our bodies. But, the Apostle gives us the hope that these bodies of ours will be transfigured. This is how he describes it: "When the trumpet sounds, we shall all be changed in an instant, as quickly as the blinking of an eye. For, when the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised, never to die again, and we shall all be changed. For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be changed into what cannot die" (1 Cor. 15:52, 53).

We live in our bodies, groaning because of many reasons. But what the Apostle points out is that: "Even the creation itself lives with the expectation that it would one day be freed from its slavery to death and decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21) The guarantee for that is the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. **Let this hope of resurrection and transfiguration make us live more creatively in this world.** The Apostle exhorts us about it in this way: "So then, my dear brothren, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless" (1 Cor. 15:58).

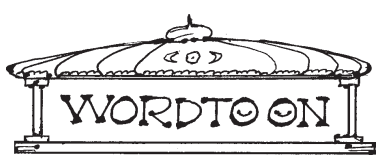
Prof. A. V. Itty, former Professor of English at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara, is, now, engaged in the Evangelical, and Educational Ministry undertaken by ADORE in the Rayagada Dist. of Odisha. 94950 17850 (Mob)

May God help us for that.

Wish all my revered readers happy Easter Greetings. ●

Food For Thought:

The hope of resurrection and the escatological transformation must radically transform the lives of ours in this world and enable us to lead a resurrected life, challenging all the forces of death.

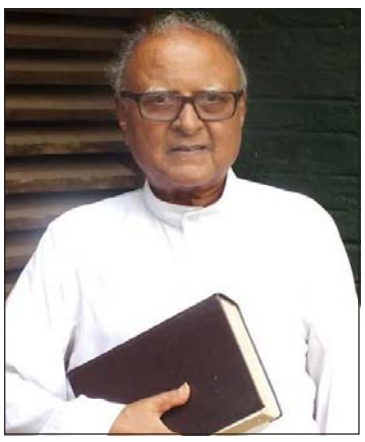


PEACE PLEASES with EASE!

Christian Conference of Asia
an organ and fellowship of churches and ecumenical councils in asia for initiating and facilitating dynamic christian witness and action

CCA mourns the passing away of distinguished Sri Lankan theologian and scholar Fr. Aloysius Pieris SJ

Fr Aloysius Pieris SJ, a distinguished Sri Lankan Jesuit theologian and scholar known for his contributions to liberation theology, inter-religious dialogue, and social justice, passed away on 22 March 2026 at the age of 91.


Fr Aloysius Pieris SJ

The General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Dr Mathews George Chunakara, expressed deep sorrow at the passing away of the distinguished Sri Lankan theologian and proponent of inter-religious dialogue, who had been a close associate of the CCA for many decades.

Fr Pieris died at his residence at the Tulana Research Centre in Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, which he founded in 1974.

Renowned globally as an illustrious voice in Asian theology, Fr Pieris articulated a vision of faith grounded in cultural and social realities. His sustained commitment to Christian – Buddhist engagement made him a unifying presence among diverse religious and cultural communities in Sri Lanka.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara stated, "Fr Aloysius Pieris, an internationally recognised Asian theologian and scholar, devoted his entire life to shaping and strengthening the bond between Christian theological insights and Asian social realities".

Fr Peiris possessed an exceptional academic record, holding degrees in philosophy, theology, classical languages, and music. He also earned a doctorate in Buddhist Studies, the first awarded to a non-Buddhist in Sri Lanka, and was proficient in Latin, Pali, and Sanskrit from a young age. He founded the Tulana Research Centre, which became a globally respected centre for inter-religious dialogue, theological reflection, and artistic expression. Through Tulana, he created a unique space where faith, culture, and social justice converged, inspiring generations.

Despite his global acclaim, Fr Pieris lived a life marked by simplicity, humility, and deep spiritual discipline. His solidarity with the poor and marginalised, and his steadfast support for progressive theological voices, earned him admiration across denominations and faith traditions. ***– CCA News***

CCA invites applications for Asian Ecumenical Institute – 2026

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is inviting applications for its annual, month-long ecumenical training programme, the Asian Ecumenical Institute (AEI) – 2026.

AEI – 2026 will be held from 5 to 31 July 2026 at the CCA headquarters on the Payap University campus in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The Asian Ecumenical Institute is a residential ecumenical formation and leadership development programme organised by the CCA for prospective ecumenical and church leaders from various Asian countries.

The theme for AEI – 2026, "Hope for Liberation Amidst the Groaning of Creation" (Romans 8: 19 - 21), invites participants into a deep and shared reflection on the suffering of creation, from bondage to decay, particularly within the Asian context. The month-long programme will explore how this "groaning" is expressed in social, environmental, and spiritual realities, while pointing toward the Christian hope that affirms the liberation of all creation.

Building on this foundation, AEI – 2026 will highlight the vital role of the ecumenical movement, both past and present, in nurturing hope and inspiring meaningful action to address creation's suffering. It seeks to challenge apathy, indifference, and neglect that harm creation, while emphasising a Christian hope that proclaims renewal and participates in its liberation.

Admissions for AEI – 2026 will be limited to twenty-four (24) participants, selected from among applicants between the ages of 25 and 35 who are recommended and endorsed by CCA's member church/ council or an ecumenical organisation/institution.

Selections will be based on an assessment of the candidate's commitment to the church and the ecumenical movement in their local and national contexts, gender, confessional balances, and national and sub-regional representation.

All applications will be accepted online via Google Forms:
AEI – 2026 Application Form

The deadline to submit completed applications for AEI – 2026 is 24 April 2026. ***– CCA News***

cheerchat

'The key is to keep company with people who UPLIFT you, whose presence calls forth your best"

– Epictetus

Oikoumene World Council of Churches

Easter Message

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile…"

– 1 Corinthians 15:17 –

**May this Easter be a time of reassurance
that in all the abysses we presently experience in the world, there is more to come.
And that it is not a dark hole that we are walking into
but a new heaven and a new earth in which all tears are wiped away.
This outlook continues to unite us in our global church community.
It connects us with all people on this earth, who are together with us created in God's image.**

How can we celebrate Easter in a time in which shouts of joy are so often drowned out by cries of despair? So many victims of war, economic injustice, sexual violence, political oppression, climate disasters, and religious persecution are to be mourned. Can we authentically celebrate Easter without addressing these sufferings?

Easter is the cornerstone of our faith as Christians. It is the one big source of hope in these troubled times. Jesus tremendously inspired the people of his time when he spoke words of love and words of hope, when he touched people with his healing hands, when he led together people from very different backgrounds into one loving community. They could feel the presence of God himself.

In a time of occupation and political oppression, Jesus opened a window into a world, in which every human being, created by God equally, would live in dignity. Hope began to spread. Yet then, came the big disappointment. They arrested Jesus. They tortured him. He was put to death and he cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It was a situation of despair. Another inspiring moral and spiritual leader in the history of the world who, in the end, failed. One more disappointed hope as we have seen it so many times and are seeing it so clearly before our eyes in these days of wars, conflicts, violence, and a climate catastrophe.

Yet, then came the third day, the experience of the women at the tomb of Jesus, that changed everything. When they came with their tears to mourn, the tomb was empty. They encountered the living Jesus. They told the story to the disciples. They overcame their disbelief and spread the good news into the whole world, so that an innumerable number of people today, many of them also in desperate situations, celebrate Easter, the feast of Jesus' resurrection, and trust in his promise to be with us" always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Death will not have the last word. The last word is life.

Our Easter belief in resurrection is not only a big source of hope but also a protest against the denial of dignity and humanity, expressed in aggressive warfare, the spreading of hate and contempt against whole groups of people, and sins such as racism, antisemitism, nationalism, or xenophobia.

Christians are people who live from a message that leads into life – a life filled with hope in the Risen Christ who conquered sin, suffering, and death.

May this Easter be a time of reassurance that in all the abysses we presently experience in the world, there is more to come. And that it is not a dark hole that we are walking into but a new heaven and a new earth in which all tears are wiped away. This outlook continues to unite us in our global church community. It connects us with all people on this earth, who are together with us created in God's image.

– WCC News

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A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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